

development of infrastructure along the identified Buddhist travel circuit in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The financial assistance is to the tune of 7.76 billion Japanese Yen. The places covered in Bihar are Bodhgaya, Nalanda, Rajgir and Vaishali. The project period is upto 20th January, 1999. The Overseas Economic Co-operation Fund loan is not available in advance. The implementing agencies have to first incur expenditure from their own resources and then claim reimbursement from Overseas Economic Co-operation Fund. The major components of the project are strengthening of National and State highways, improvement of local roads, landscaping, augmentation of water and electricity supply and setting up of wayside amenities.

Change in the Timings of 8301-Hirakud Express

978. SHRI SARAT PATTANAYAK : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have received any representation regarding the change in timings of 8301-Hirakud Express; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b) Representations were received for restoration of the old timings of 8301/8302 Hirakud Express which has been done w.e.f. 10.02.97.

New Post Offices

979. SHRI MURLIDHAR JENA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to open new post offices in the country; and

(b) if so, the criteria and the target fixed for the current year in this regard, State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes Sir.

(b) Criteria for opening of Post Offices and the Postal Circle-wise targets fixed for the current year (1996-97) are given in Statements I and II respectively.

Statement-I

Norms for Opening of Post Offices

1. Norms for opening of new Branch Post Office

1.1 Population

(a) In Normal areas :

3000 population in a group of villages (including the PPO villages).

(b) In the hilly, tribal, desert and inaccessible areas :

500 population in an individual village or 1000 population in a group of villages.

1.2

Distance :

(a) In Normal Areas :

The minimum distance from the nearest existing Post Office will be 3 Kms.

(b) In hilly, tribal, desert and inaccessible areas:

The distance limit will be the same as above except that in Hilly Areas, the minimum distance limit can be relaxed by the Directorate in cases where such relaxation is warranted by special circumstances which should be clearly explained while submitting a proposal.

1.3

Anticipated Income :

(a) In Normal Areas :

The minimum anticipated revenue will be $33\frac{1}{3}$ of cost.

(b) In hilly, tribal, desert and inaccessible areas:

The minimum anticipated income will be 15% of the cost.

2.

Norms of Opening New Departmental Sub Post Offices :

2.1

In Rural areas :

The minimum of work load of the Extra Departmental Branch Post Office should be five hours per day. The permissible annual loss should be not more than Rs. 2400/- in normal rural areas and Rs. 400/- in Tribal and Hilly areas.

2.2

In Urban Areas :

2.2.1

In Urban areas, the Post Office should be initially self-supporting and at the time of the first annual review, it should show 5% profit to be eligible for further retention.

2.2.2.

The distance between two Post Office should not be less than 1.5 Km. in cities with a population of 20 lakhs and above, and 2 Kms. in other Urban areas. If it is a Delivery Post Office, the distance from the nearest Delivery Post Office should be less than 5 Kms.

Heads of Circles have powers to relax the distance condition in 10% of the cases.

2.2.3.

A delivery Post Office in Urban Area should have a minimum of 7 Postmen's beats.

Statement-II

Post Circle-wise targets for opening Departmental Sub Post Offices and Extra Departmental Branch Post Offices under Annual Plan, 1996-97 :

| S.No. | Name of the Circle | Departmental Sub Post Offices | Extra Departmental Branch Post Offices. |
|-------|--------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. | Andhra Pradesh | 5 | 2 |
| 2. | Assam | 4 | 2 |
| 3. | Bihar | 11 | 10 |
| 4. | Delhi | 10 | 1 |
| 5. | Gujarat | 12 | 5 |
| 6. | Haryana | 10 | 4 |
| 7. | Himachal Pradesh | 10 | 4 |
| 8. | Jammu and Kashmir | 2 | 2 |
| 9. | Karnataka | 10 | 2 |
| 10. | Kerala | 9 | 1 |
| 11. | Madhya Pradesh | 9 | 9 |
| 12. | Maharashtra | 12 | 9 |
| 13. | North-East | 4 | 2 |
| 14. | Orissa | 4 | 4 |
| 15. | Punjab | 4 | 2 |
| 16. | Rajasthan | 10 | 5 |
| 17. | Tamil Nadu | 4 | 2 |
| 18. | Uttar Pradesh | 16 | 12 |
| 19. | West Bengal | 4 | 2 |
| Total | | 150 | 80 |

Note : Postal Circle of North-East comprises the States of Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura, Nagaland, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh. Similarly, Goa forms part of Maharashtra Postal Circle and the state of Sikkim forms part of West Bengal Circle.

The following Union Territories are covered by the Postal Circles mentioned against each of them :

| | | |
|------------------------|---|--------------------|
| Andaman and Nicobar | : | West Bengal Circle |
| Chandigarh | : | Punjab Circle |
| Dadra and Nagar Haveli | : | Gujarat |
| Daman and Diu | : | -do- |
| Lakshdweep | : | Kerala Circle |
| Pondicherry | : | Tamil Nadu Circle |

Doubling of Ernakulam-Kayamkulam Rail Line

980. PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have received any representation for doubling the Ernakulam-Kayamkulam railway line via Kottayam and Alappuzha;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) A survey for doubling of Ernakulam-Kayamkulam rail line via Alleppy and Kottayam has been taken up. Further, consideration of the project would be possible once the survey report becomes available.

Vacant Posts of Junior Accounts Officer

981. SHRI RAJKESHAR SINGH : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether a large number of posts of Junior Accounts Officer are lying vacant despite availability of the requisite qualified employees in the Department of Posts;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons for not filling up these posts since 1990, till date;

(c) whether Department of Telecommunications has taken a number of employees from Department of Posts on deputation;

(d) if so, whether the employees of DoT are getting promotion after passing only first part of the Junior Accounts Officer Examination;

(e) if so, the reason for not giving the due right of the employees working in Department of Posts who have already cleared both parts of Junior Accounts Officer Examination; and

(f) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) and (b) Yes Sir. Against the sanctioned strength of 3490 JAOs, 196 posts are lying vacant. Since the Department of Telecom and Department of Posts are separate, the qualified JAOs in the Department of Posts are not eligible for appointment in the Department of Telecom. The year-wise vacancy position is given below :

| | |
|------|------|
| 1990 | 1009 |
| 1991 | 1024 |
| 1992 | 704 |
| 1993 | 306 |
| 1994 | 457 |
| 1995 | 497 |
| 1996 | 568 |
| 1997 | 196 |